

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 /086 W
-----150812Z 054096 /14

R 150611Z JAN 77
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4027
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 0093

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT IZ
SUBJECT: BAATHI REGIONAL COMMAND EXPANDED

1. IN AN EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE BAATH NATIONAL AND
REGIONAL COMMANDS ON JANUARY 10, 1977, THE BAATHI LEADERSHIP
EXPANDED THE IRAQI REGIONAL COMMAND MEMBERSHIP FROM 13
TO 21 BY THE ELECTION EIGHT NEW MEMBERS. THE NEW MEMBERS
ARE:

--SA'DOUN SHAKER- THE CHIEF OF THE MUKHABARAT, THE IRAQI
INTELLIGENCE SERVICE.

--JA'FAR QASSEM HAMMOUDI- LONG TIME BAATHI FUNCTIONARY WHO
HAS HELD HIGH RANK IN PARTY SINCE THE 1950'S. CONSIDERED
TO BE HONEST, RELIABLE AND UNINSPIRING. CURRENTLY A
MEMBER OF BAATH PARTY BAGHDAD COMMAND.

--ABDULLAH FADHIL-- A SCHOOLTEACHER FROM SAMARRA WHO
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JOINED PARTY IN 1958. PREVIOUSLY SERVED ON BAGHDAD
COMMAND AND AS GOVERNOR OF MAISAN AND TA'MEEM PROVINCES.
--FLAYEH HASSAN- A SCHOOLTEACHER FROM MEQDADIYA
DISTRICT. PREVIOUSLY MEMBER OF NINEVEH COMMAND AND
MORE RECENTLY APPOINTED MINISTER OF INDUSTRY.
--TAREQ AZIZ- MINISTER OF INFORMATION SINCE 1974.
ARRTICULATE, INTELLIGENT CHRISTIAN FROM MOSUL.

--ADNAN KHERALLAH- YOUNG AND UNIMPORESSIVE BUT WITH ALL THE RIGHT FAMILY CONNECTIONS. BROTHER-IN-LAW TO BAKR'S SON.

--HIKMAT IBRAHIM AZZAWI- CURRENT MINISTER OF EXTERNAL TRADE. BORN IN DIYALA GOVERNORATE AND FORMER DEPUTY SECRETARY OF BAGHDAD COMMAND.

--MOHAMMED AYESH- CHAIRMAN OF GENRAL FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS SINCE 1968.

2. NEW MEMBERS ARE REMARKABLY HOMOGENOUS. THEY HAVE AVERAGE AGE OF 39 YEARS AND HAVE BEEN PARTY MEMBERS FOR AVERAGE OF 21 YEARS. TYPICALLY THEY JOINED PARTY IN THEIR LATE TEENS AND ALL EXCEPT TARIQ AZIZ HAVE BEEN ARRESTED AT SOME TIME DURING THEIR CAREER FOR PARTY ACTIVITIES. THEY ARE ALL LONG TERM ASSOCIATES OF SADDAM HUSSEIN AND ARE ALL APPROXIMATELY HIS AGE. MOST STARTED THEIR CAREERS AS PROVINCIAL SCHOOL TEACHERS AND FEW HAVE HAD ANY EXPERIENCE OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF IRAQ OR, FOR THAT MATTER, OUTSIDE OF THE CLOSED, CONTROLLED, SECRETIVE, AND CONSPIRATORIAL SOCIETY OF THE BAATH PARTY.

3. THREE NEW CANDIDATE MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COMMAND WERE ALSO APPOINTED. THEY ARE MOHAMMED HAMZA, BURHAN AL-DEEN ABDUL RAHMAN MUSTAGE, AND KAMEL YASSEN RASHID. THEIR AGE AND BACKGROUND ARE VERY SIMILAR TO THE EIGHT APPOINTED AS FULL MEMBERS. KAMEL YASSEN RASHID HAS BEEN THE DOMINANT FULL-TIME FIGURE ON THE MILITARY BUREAU OF THE REGIONAL COMMAND.

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4. EXPANSION OF REGIONAL COMMAND IS ONE FURTHER STEP IN SADDAM HUSSEIN'S EFFORTS TO CONSOLIDATE HIS POSITION AS IRAQ'S STRONG MAN. ALL OF THE NEW APPOINTEES ARE CONSIDERED TO BE "SADDAM'S MEN" AND THE ONLY REMAINING ALTERNATE MEMBER WHO OPPOSED SADDAM'S ELECTION TO THE REGIONAL COMMAND IN 1969, SHAFIQ ABDUL JABBAR (AL-KAMALI), WAS POINTEDLY PASSED OVER FOR PROMOTION TO FULL MEMBER STATUS.

5. WITH EXPANSION IN MEMBERSHIP, REGIONAL COMMAND IS ALSO ASSUMING INCREASING IMPORTANCE. TRADITIONAL RCC FUNCTIONS ARE BEING SHIFTED TO REGIONAL COMMAND, OR TO MINISTRIES WHOSE MINISTERS ARE ON REGIONAL COMMAND. SADDAM IS ALSO TAKING STEPS TO REDUCE THE EXTRAORDINARY POWERS WHICH HAVE DZEN VESTED IN THE OFFICES OF THE VICE-CHAIRMAN DURINCHIS INCUMBENCY. AFTER HE BECOMES PRESIDENT, HE WOULD OBVIOUSLY PREFER NOT TO HAVE ANOTHER SADDAM HUSSEIN AS VICE-CHAIRMAN.

6. IN THE COMPETITION FOR INFLUENCE WITH SADDAM, CURRENT FRONT RUNNERS SEEM TO THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR IZZAT IBRAHIM (AL-DURI), MINISTER OF INFORMATION TAREQ AZZIZ, MINISTER OF PLANNING ADNAN HUSSEIN (HAMDANI), MINISTER OF INDUSTRY FLAYEH HASSAN, MINISTER OF INTERNAL TRADE HASSAN ALI (AL-AMRI), AND INTELLIGNECE CHIEF SA'DOUN SHAKER, ALL OF WHOM ARE NOW MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COMMAND. FORMER MINISTER OF INDUSTRY,

TAHA YASSIN RAMADHAN (AL-JAZRAWI), WHO IS ON BOTH THE RCC AND THE REGIONAL COMMAND, HAS DECLINED IN INFLUENCE FOLLOWING HIS EARLY OPPOSITION TO SADDAM'S PRODUCTIVITY DRIVE. FOREIGN MINISTER HAMMADI, WHO IS A PARTY JMEMBER, BUT DOES NOT HAVE A HIGH RANK WITHIN THE PARTY, SEEMS RECENTLY TO HAVE RISEN IN INFLUENCE AS A RESULT OF HIS HANDLING OF TT

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MUSCAT FOREIGN MINISTER'S CONFERENCE WHICH PRODUCED THE DESIRED NEGATIVE RESULT. FINANCE MINISTER AL-QAISI, A NON-BAATHI AND AN OPENLY PRO-WESTERN BANKER, HAS REPORTEDLY IMPRESSED SADDAM BY HIS SOLID PERFORMANCE IN OFFICE.

7. MINISTER OF INDUSTRY FLAYEH HASSAN AND MINISTER OF INTERNAL TRADE AL2'-48, BOTH SENIOR PARTY MEN AND MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COMMAND, HAVE IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL PARTY RESPONSIBILITIES. HASSAN IS IN CHARGE OF RELATIONS WITH THE SHIA COMMUNITY AND AL-AMRI HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR RELATIONS WITH THE KURDISH COMMUNITY.

3. EXPANSION IN REGIONAL COMMAND WILL PROBABLY INCREASE THE EXTENT TO WHICH BAATH PARTY FUNCTIONS AS THE EFFECTIVE, BEHIND-THE-SCENES, GOVERNMENT. PARTY MEMBERS LOOK UPON THEMSELVES AS A DEDICATED AND HARD WORKING ELITE WHO HAVE A SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO COMPENSATE FOR THE TRADITIONAL CORRUPTION AND INEFFICIENCY OF THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT.

9. MORE BIO DETAIL ON REGIONAL COMMAND MEMBERS WILL FOLLOW BY AIRGRAM.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY STRENGTH, PARTY LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BAGHDA00093
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770016-0008
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770149/aaaabqfd.tel
Line Count: 165
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 932171d9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3589194
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BAATHI REGIONAL COMMAND EXPANDED
TAGS: PINT, IZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/932171d9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009